

SPRING 2026

Thanks to you, everyone is welcome here

Inside a former church in Hamilton's east end, Welcome Inn Community Centre is a place where neighbours find food, friendship, and support—and you help make that happen.

Welcome Inn Community Centre is humming with activity. Downstairs, in the small storage room stacked neatly with boxes of nutritious food, volunteers sort donations and pack up bags of groceries for waiting families.

Upstairs, neighbours catch up in the sanctuary—a warm, welcoming space flooded with light from the former church's stained glass windows.

"This place is always buzzing," smiles Emily Zimmerman, Welcome Inn's only paid food bank staff member.

In just a few hours, this small but mighty food bank serves 65-70 families—putting food on the table for more than 250 people a day.

Everyone is welcome here

Welcome Inn is special among food banks. Anyone in Hamilton is welcome, no appointment required, regardless of where you live.

"We're one of the only fully drop-in food banks," Emily explains. "If someone needs food, they can come."



Serving the community in this way means meeting needs that can often be unpredictable. But your support helps Welcome Inn stay stocked and ready to serve everyone who turns to them. Hamilton Food Share provides healthy food to Welcome Inn four times a week, including donations from food retailers and the community.

"Because Hamilton Food Share handles those relationships, we can focus on serving people," Emily shares. "The support is huge for a place our size."

Thanks to generous people like you, this small local food bank, run by just Emily and a team of dedicated volunteers, is able to make an incredible difference in our community.

Neighbours helping neighbours

Many of the volunteers at Welcome Inn are also clients themselves, navigating their own challenges, but still making time to give back. Lonita, who has volunteered for the past year, understands firsthand how important the food bank can be.



A MESSAGE FROM RADHIKA



Dear Friend,

Spring is finally here! Many of us greet it with new energy and a sense of fresh possibilities.

But when every day is a struggle to pay the rent or put food on the table, it can be hard to feel that way.

Thanks to your generosity, neighbours across Hamilton have somewhere to turn for nourishing food and *hope*. **Every hamper packed, every delivery made, every meal on a family's table is about much more than filling stomachs. It's about giving people the stability and support they need to "spring forward".**

Together, you made our 2026 Spring Drive a huge success, ensuring kids, families, and seniors across our community will have nutritious food on the table in the weeks to come.

My friend, thank you so much for being there. You know that spring feeling, when you turn your face up to the sun, breathe

easier, and feel the weight of the winter melting away? That's what your support feels like to our neighbours facing hunger—and to food banks across our city.

As we look to the summer, it means the world to know you'll be there by our side—because when school meal programs end for the year, Hamilton's kids and their families will need us more than ever before.

With my heartfelt thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Radhika".

Radhika Subramanyan
Chief Executive Officer

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"It's a relief for people," she says. "They're often in a very desperate situation. I understand that, because I'm in it too."

Welcome Inn is also much more than a food bank. The building hosts an after-school program, a senior's dining club, and settlement services for newcomers. Many of the volunteers come through the settlement program itself, building language skills and connections while giving back.

All of these services—and the people behind them—foster a powerful sense of community.

"It's not just about getting calories into people," Emily says. "Food is the starting point. From there, we help people connect with other supports, and with each other."

Thank you for welcoming neighbours in

By the time the afternoon winds down, volunteers are still moving through the building, packing groceries and helping neighbours. Some leave with bags of food for their own families. Others pause to connect and say goodbye.

Every day here, your support welcomes hundreds of people through the doors, ensuring that



every neighbour in need has somewhere to turn for food and support.

"It's amazing to watch the community come together," Emily says. "We couldn't do this work without your support. Thank you!"

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

When neighbours help neighbours, Hamilton thrives

For nearly 40 years, the Neighbour to Neighbour Centre has been a place where Hamilton families can come for nourishing food and support.

The Neighbour to Neighbour Centre (N2N) has been a steady, supportive presence for families across Hamilton Mountain, including Upper Stoney Creek.

Here, neighbours who are facing challenges find more than just groceries. They find relief, dignity, and community. And it's all made possible by people like you.

You're helping over 3,200 families

Every year, thousands of households rely on N2N's emergency food bank to keep healthy food on the table. **Last year alone, the team helped more than 3,200 families, providing over 1.3 million pounds of food—nearly half of that was fresh produce, dairy, and meat—nutritious staples that many families would otherwise go without.**

But the support families find at N2N goes beyond the food bank.

Through the Hamilton Community Food Centre, neighbours come together to grow, cook, and share meals in a space where everyone is welcome and everyone belongs. From gardening programs to a community kitchen, these food-focused programs create a sense of belonging while helping build skills, confidence, and connection.

A community coming together

Alongside these much-needed food programs, N2N also connects families with counselling, educational supports, and other resources that help them move forward.

None of this would be possible without the support of the community. The Coldest Night of the Year walk was a powerful



Hamilton Food Share team, N2N, and friends and family at this year's Coldest Night of the Year Walk

example—where hundreds in Hamilton came together to raise vital funds and awareness for neighbours facing hunger, hardship, and homelessness. Hamilton Food Share was proud to walk alongside N2N on the Coldest Night, and every day of the year.

Thank you for being there for your neighbours in Hamilton Mountain and giving families the food and support they need.

YOUR GENEROSITY IN ACTION*



7,153

HOUSEHOLD VISITS TO
HAMILTON'S FOOD BANKS
EACH MONTH



30,473

NEIGHBOURS RELIED ON
HAMILTON'S FOOD BANKS



23

LOCAL HUNGER RELIEF
PROGRAMS SUPPORTED

YOU INSPIRE US

A Standing Ovation for Theatre Aquarius



Night after night this past winter, Theatre Aquarius audiences were swept away by the magic of *Frozen: The Broadway Musical*. But the show didn't just warm hearts—it helped feed Hamilton families.

Through a season-long 50/50 fundraiser, the Theatre Aquarius team raised an incredible \$68,800. Half went to a lucky ticket holder, while the remaining \$34,400 was shared between Theatre Aquarius and Hamilton Food Share, helping ensure more neighbours across our city have nutritious food on the table.

This generosity is part of a long-standing partnership between Theatre Aquarius and Hamilton Food Share. Over the past decade, Theatre Aquarius audiences have given well over half a million dollars to support families and food programs across the community.

The Theatre Aquarius team truly puts generosity and community centre stage. At the end of each performance, an actor invites the audience to do their part.

“We know it’s important that people understand the depth of need,” the Theatre Aquarius team shares. “When families approach the table together, it often becomes a ‘teaching moment’ about the importance of giving back.”

“The arts community and those that support the arts are among the most generous. We are grateful for their collective passion and support.”

We are deeply grateful to the entire Theatre Aquarius community—the dedicated volunteers, talented cast and crew, and every audience member who gave to support neighbours facing hunger in Hamilton. Thank you!

CELEBRATING AN EXCITING MILESTONE!

Hamilton Food Share is proud to share that we are now officially accredited through Food Banks Canada’s Standards of Excellence program!

This national accreditation recognizes food banks that meet rigorous standards in areas like client care and dignity, food safety, governance, and operational excellence.

This milestone reflects our commitment to providing the highest level of service to the neighbours who rely on us—now, and for generations to come. Thank you for putting your trust in us, and for standing with us every step of the way.

